Jim Dandies

By John Murray

There were six men in Company B, Ninth Infantry, who were nicknamed Jim Dandies. They were six spick and span fellows, who always looked fresh and clean and presentable, and they were always detailed for the best headquarters posts. This caused jealousy, and it was natural that by and by a story should get afloat that the six recruits were fellows without sand. It could be truthfully said that their courage had not been tested, as the Indians had been quiet for a long time, but no one argued thus. It was easier to go with the majority and say with some of the old veterans:

"You just mark my words. If we ever get into a brush with the reds it will take four men apiece to hold these dudes on the firing line."

The Jim Dandies were attracted to each other and formed a coterie. They organized a glee club, sang love songs, read popular novels and bought toilet soap. They even wore linen collars, and it was said of at least three of them that they rubbed their faces with bay rum after a shave. The Jims were guyed and ridiculed, but they went their way and bided their time.

They had put in a year of this when the call came for the Ninth to take the field. The red men had grown tired of peace and wanted war again.

"Now keep your eyes on our Jim Dandies," said the veterans to each other as they went marching away. "If we buck up ag'in the Sioux you'll see six sissy men fainting away to be chucked into the ambulance."

The Ninth went out for business and found it. On the third day after leaving the fort it found a big force of Indians in its front, and the fight was hot from the beginning. The reds had the advantage of numbers, and by and by they began to work around on the left flank of the command. The colonel saw it, but he could spare only a few men to checkmate the move. They must get into the broken ground and die fighting. It was a military necessity that a small force should be sent, but he hesitated to issue the order, and finally called for a sergeant to lead a

THE SIX JIMS SANG AS THEY WENT.

band of volunteers. The six Jim Dandies came to the front at once. Even on the march they had clean collars on.

"What in time is this!" growled the sergeant as they stopped out. "It's going to take old veterans to hold that ground, and these are only dudes."

"Give us a chance, colonel," appealed one of the Jims.

The seven men took open order and double quicked across the open into cover, and the six Jims sang as they went. The colonel looked blank, and 500 men laughed, and the Indians almost ceased their fire as they wondered what was up.

"Now, dudes," said the sergeant as they reached cover, "this is no making love to a red headed girl on the veranda of a summer hotel. We've got to hold them Injuns off this flank if we die trying. You've got a chance to show what you're made of, and durn my buttons if I don't plug the first man who looks to the rear!"

For answer the Jims sang a verse of a war ballad and then dropped down just as the Indian bullets began to sing about them. The sergeant cursed and muttered, and over on the line, half a mile away, the major said to the colonel as the singing reached their ears:

"Did you ever know the like of that? I'm afraid this minstrel show business will end in our being flanked."

But even as he spoke the muskets got to work and rattled away so rapidly that there seemed a score instead of half a dozen, and the colonel's face lost its look of anxiety. A force of thirty Indians were sent down against the half dozen, but they could not get nearer than a certain line. There was an open space to cross, and every redskin who tried it was tumbled on his face. When there was shooting to do, the Jims buckled down to it. When there came a lull, one of them would strike up a song, and the others would join in the chorus. The sergeant sought to hush them, saying that songs did not belong to Upton's tactics, but they sang the louder and sang him down.

The Ninth had got itself into a hole. It was not strong enough to drive the enemy from its front, and were it to attempt a retrograde movement the Indians would be encouraged to swarm out in full force. The officers saw the situation before the men did, but when the latter became aware of it there was a flutter along the line. It might have been more than a flutter, and the colonel's heart was in his mouth and his teeth set hard when from the Jim Dandies over on the flank came the rousing chorus of "John Brown." It stopped the flutter. Some men laughed and some swore, but the song led their thoughts into another channel.

Again the Indians pressed down on the left flank. They had discovered that only half a dozen men opposed them and that to win the flank was to win the battle, but even with five to one, owing to the nature of the ground, they could make no way. The Jims were shooting to kill when they were not laughing or singing, and the sergeant watched them closely and muttered to himself:

"I've been down on these dudes along with the crowd, but blast my eyes if I ever saw purtier fighting. I guess I've got to take back what I've said. Say, now, but what's the matter over in the center?"

The matter was that a company was being withdrawn to re-enforce the right, but the movement caused uneasiness and a slackening of the fire. Men were beginning to look to the rear and breathe heavily and the Indians to utter whoops of exultation and make ready for a rush when the six Jim Dandies, who were temporarily out of it, leaped up on the rocks and began to sing a topical song. It was new to most of their comrades, and the jolly air caught on at once and started cheers all along the line. Two hundred men joined in the chorus, and they were singing yet as the colonel perfected his plans and ordered a forward movement. There was a grand charge and a rout, and the Ninth had not only extricated itself, but won a victory to be proud of.

"Splendid move of yours, colonel," said the major when the fight had been won.

"But I couldn't have made it without the singing. Tell Captain Barnes to send his six Jim Dandies to me. I want to thank 'em personally. A dude glee club beats artillery all to pieces at fighting Indians."

Influence of Sainte-Beuve.

Sainte-Beuve is the foremost literary critic of the nineteenth century in the influence he has exerted upon his fellows. In a very real sense Matthew Arnold in England and Taine in France are his disciples, or at least he is their literary ancestor. They derive from him, and the doctrines they have made explicit are often implicit in him. The part of Taine's critical theory which has withstood the test of time is that which Taine acquired from Sainte-Beuve, and not a few of the points which Arnold pressed insistently on the attention of all who read English he took over from his French predecessor. There are no real critics of literature of our time, from Mr. James in America to M. Brunetiere in France, who have not come under his spell at some period of their own development and who have not sharpened their own vision by a more or less deliberate application of the methods of Sainte-Beuve.—Brander Matthews in Century.

Three Queer Animal Tales.

The Indians say that if a beaver sent out from the parents' lodge fails to find a mate he is set to repair the dam. If he fails a second time he is banished.

An Arab writer has the same story. He tells us that those who buy beaver skins can distinguish between the skins of masters and slaves. The latter have the hair of the head rubbed off because they have to pound the wood for their masters' food and do it with their heads.

One more story is about the puma, the "friend of man." A certain Maldonada, a girl of Buenos Ayres, was falsely accused of having sought to betray the town to the Indians and was condemned to be exposed in the forest. An enormous puma guarded her all night from the attacks of other beasts. The next day she was taken back to the town and pronounced to be innocent.—From Edmund Selous' "Romance of the Animal World."

The First Meerschaum.

A shoemaker, Kavol Kowates, who in 1823 lived at Pesth, the capital of Hungary, smoked the first meerschaum pipe. Besides being a shoemaker, however, he was one of nature's handicraftsmen, being gifted with an intuitive genius for carving in wood and other material. This brought him into contact with Count Andrassy, with whom he became a great favorite. The count on his return from a mission to Turkey brought with him a piece of whitish clay, which had been presented to him as a curiosity on account of its extraordinary light, specific gravity. It struck the shoemaker that, being porous, it must be well adapted for pipes, as it would absorb the nicotine. The experiment was tried, and Kavol cut a pipe for the count and one for himself. This first meerschaum pipe made and smoked by Kavol Kowates has been preserved in the museum at Pesth.

Holland Cheese.

Holland is the land of flatness, windmills, dikes, canals and cheese. Of the latter they produce 40,000 tons and more in a year and consume only a fourth part. Alkmaar, one of the most noted and historical towns in the country, is the great cheese market, and in its streets over 12,000,000 pounds are sold annually.

Light Diet.

Dubbs—No animal can exist on nothing. Tubbs—Oh, yes; moths eat holes.

The Club Woman's Husband.

Some women are accompanied by maids to club conventions and occasionally by children, but almost never by husbands. The American husband fills his wife's purse, gives her a check book for emergencies, bids her a proud "Au revoir" at partings and is content to read of her speeches and her gowns and perhaps to see her picture in the sensational newspapers while she is away. Usually the husband of a woman of prominence in these matters is a hardworking individual, himself having neither the courage, the parts nor the liking for public demonstrations. The quick lunch in a crowded restaurant is the only break in his day's grind, but he grudges his wife nothing of her publicity or luxury.—American Lady in London Telegraph.